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**1 – Austin water drinkable again, but keep usage low, officials say, Austin American-Statesman, 10/28/18**

<https://www.statesman.com/news/20181028/austin-water-drinkable-again-but-keep-usage-low-officials-say>

Just under a week after Austin leaders issued a boil-water notice that sent residents into an uncertain limbo that edged on panic before settling into mild irritation, Austin Water officials on Sunday gave the green light to drinking water straight from the tap.

**2 – Why the EPA is looking to Texas for scientific advice, Austin American-Statesman, 10/26/18**

<https://www.statesman.com/news/20181026/why-epa-is-looking-to-texas-for-scientific-advice>

Among the newly named members of a key U.S. Environmental Protection Agency science advisory board is a deputy toxicologist for the state of Texas whose work has been criticized as part of a state effort to downplay the health effects of smog.

**3 – Texas complains about cost of meeting pollution standards, E&E News, 10/26/18**

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2018/10/26/stories/1060104511>

The head of Texas' environmental agency is attacking long-standing procedures for meeting national air quality standards only two weeks after one of his employees won appointment to an EPA advisory panel that helps set those standards.

**4 – GM proposes electric car mandate, The Hill, 10/26/18**

<https://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/413399-overnight-energy-gm-pushes-for-national-electric-car-mandate>

Major car manufacturer General Motors is asking the Trump administration to back a national car program that would make automakers in all 50 states annually increase their output of electric vehicles.

**5 – 21 States, 5 Cities Demand Trump Administration Preserve California's Stricter Fuel Efficiency Guidelines, Fortune, 10/26/18**

<http://fortune.com/2018/10/26/states-demand-weaker-clean-car-rules-withdrawn/>

Attorney generals from 21 states and leaders of five cities demanded that the Trump administration withdraw its attempt to weaken clean car standards. The federal government said it will weaken federal targets for vehicle fuel efficiency, and end California's ability to set stricter standards than those applied nationally.

**6 – EPA Chided Over Defense to Gulf Pollution Claims, Bloomberg, 10/26/18**

<https://news.bloomberglaw.com/product-liability-and-toxics-law/epa-chided-over-defense-to-gulf-pollution-claims>

A federal judge chided the EPA for defending itself from an environmental group's suit by asserting that its documents on loosened oxygen standards for some Gulf Coast waters "speak for themselves."

**7 – Progress in Craft-Turney water supply issues TCEQ continues investigating source of contamination, The Cherokeean Herald, 10/26/18**

<https://www.thecherokeean.com/articles/45201/view>

While the do not use order has been lifted for Craft Turney Water Supply Corporation's customers, state and corporation officials continue to work together to determine the source of the recent contamination found in the utility's water.

**8 – Baton Rouge area groundwater commission won't follow 'absurd' state law, chairman says, Baton Rouge Advocate, 10/27/18**

[https://www.theadvocate.com/baton\\_rouge/news/environment/article\\_d563ac36-d87b-11e8-b7ea-ff9b97013687.html](https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/environment/article_d563ac36-d87b-11e8-b7ea-ff9b97013687.html)

The chairman of the local groundwater commission says he isn't going to let "absurd" state laws prevent Ascension Parish from having a say in managing the area's main aquifer.

**9 – Panel OKs effort to set rule on wells, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, 10/28/18**

<https://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2018/oct/28/conservation-plan-adds-2-watersheds-epa-1/>

The Arkansas Pollution Control and Ecology Commission has approved starting a rule-making process to transfer a permitting program for oil and gas disposal wells from one state agency to another.

**10 – Panel delays action on water quality plan from Huntsville, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, 10/28/18**

<https://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2018/oct/28/panel-delays-action-on-water-quality-pl/>

A proposal to change water quality standards in Northwest Arkansas to accommodate for a city's wastewater treatment plant was tabled Friday by an environmental regulatory oversight commission.

**11 – Attorney: Saline Creek gravel operation should be shut down now, Tulsa World, 10/28/18**

[https://www.tulsaworld.com/news/local/attorney-saline-creek-gravel-operation-should-be-shut-down-now/article\\_0a779c6a-1f3a-58be-b629-a6e3cfd89436.html](https://www.tulsaworld.com/news/local/attorney-saline-creek-gravel-operation-should-be-shut-down-now/article_0a779c6a-1f3a-58be-b629-a6e3cfd89436.html)

After a gravel mining operation's U.S. Supreme Court bid was denied early this month, an attorney fighting the operation on Saline Creek said it should have been shut down by now to prevent any further damage.

**12 – San Angelo one of many entities pursuing wastewater reuse programs, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, 10/28/18**

<https://www.gosanangelo.com/story/news/2018/10/27/san-angelo-one-many-entities-pursuing-wastewater-reuse-programs/1789968002/>

Even in the midst of a particularly rainy year, West Texans know the next drought may be just around the corner, and conservation is always the best policy.

**13 – EPA grant to aid agriculture training site, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, 10/28/18**

<https://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2018/oct/26/springdale-s-towne-park-sold-for-28-9m-/>

The National Center for Appropriate Technology in Fayetteville was awarded a \$100,000 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency to help restore a 170-year-old farm into a training site.

**14 – Opinion: 'Environmentalism' shouldn't be a dirty word for Republicans, Houma (LA) Courier, 10/28/18**

<http://www.houmatoday.com/news/20181027/opinion-environmentalism-shouldnt-be-dirty-word-for-republicans>

Is there a more despised word among Republicans than "environmentalist"? For many GOP voters, the term conjures up a mental image of tree-hugging socialists hell-bent on regulating our country back to the Stone Age.

# Statesman

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## **Austin water drinkable again, but keep usage low, officials say**

**By Brandon Mulder**

**By Mark D. Wilson**

Posted Oct 28, 2018 at 11:39 AM

Updated Oct 28, 2018 at 7:17 PM

Just under a week after Austin leaders issued a boil-water notice that sent residents into an uncertain limbo that edged on panic before settling into mild irritation, Austin Water officials on Sunday gave the green light to drinking water straight from the tap.

Customers no longer need to boil water before drinking it, cooking with it or making ice from it. Residents also don't need to flush the pipes in their homes, the water utility said.

"Water has continued to circulate in the distribution system during the boil-water notice," the utility said on its website. "Water used for laundry, showering, or boiling for consumption has created enough flushing effect for most homes. There should be no need to flush water from hot water heaters, irrigation systems, showers, clothes washing machines or outdoor faucets."

Austin Water still recommends “drawing and discarding at least one quart of water from your refrigerator water dispenser before drinking.”

“Automatic ice makers should be emptied of any ice created during the boil water order; allow the machine to make new ice and discard any ice produced during the next 24 hours,” the utility said.

According to city officials, the water treatment system restored water quality enough for human consumption, and Austin Water provided TCEQ with laboratory test results that show the water no longer requires boiling.

The TCEQ allowed these municipal Austin Water customers to lift their boil rules: Rollingwood, Sunset Valley, Creedmoor Maha WSC, High Valley WSC, Marsha WSC, Mid-Tex Utility, Morningside Subdivision, Nighthawk WSC, Northtown MUD, North Austin MUD, Rivercrest Water System, Travis County WCID No. 10 and Wells Branch MUD.

Austin Mayor Steve Adler, City Manager Spencer Cronk and Austin Water Director Greg Meszaros touted the end of the Austin boil-water notice in front of City Hall on Sunday with glasses of tap water in hand.

“This was a big event, and we handled it well,” Adler said.

The city advised residents to save water instead of unnecessarily flushing water lines, “but if it makes you feel better, of course you can,” Adler said.

Restaurants, on the other hand, are encouraged to flush their lines for two to three minutes, discard ice produced under the boil water notice, and flush soda dispensers.

Outdoor water use, such as irrigating lawns, washing cars or filling swimming pools, will continue to be prohibited for the next couple of days as the city’s water system regains its full capacity. City officials gave no precise date by which they expect to lift the ban on outdoor water use.

“We’re not expecting any problems, but just want people to be mindful of the need to manage their water use as we’re coming back up to full speed,” Meszaros said.

The city water utility will begin “taking a hard look” at the central causes of the last week’s water quality concerns to better adapt its systems for emergencies.

“Everything worked the way it was supposed to work in response to this situation. I haven’t heard of anyone getting sick,” Adler said.

Austin Water issued the boil water notice in the wee hours of Oct. 22 and later imposed emergency conservation restrictions after water treatment operations became overwhelmed by unprecedented amounts of dirt, silt, and debris that washed into the Highland Lakes from the Llano River basin after heavy rains, the city said.

The water quality alert, released in the wee hours of the morning, left many residents wondering how to bathe, brush their teeth and make breakfast without using tap water, and sent many others scrambling to grocery stores for bottled water, which quickly sold out.

Meszaros had said on Friday that the utility’s water treatment plants were pumping out clean water at higher and higher rates, but that it could still be another week before the system is running at full capacity.

Meszaros said officials are still asking people to conserve as much water as possible until then.

“As we get through this immediate crisis, as we clean up our systems and do repairs and check the system, in the weeks and months ahead we’ll be doing very detailed after-action review and analysis of what happened and what our recommendations will be to improve the resiliency of our system, so that the next time an event like this were to happen, that we would be better prepared and better able to weather through it,” he said.

While Austin was under the boil-water notice, the city established seven bottled-water distribution sites across town that handed out a total of 271,652 cases of water, or 625,608 gallons, over four days.

## Why the EPA is looking to Texas for scientific advice

By Asher Price

Posted Oct 26, 2018 at 11:59 AM

Updated Oct 26, 2018 at 2:38 PM

Among the newly named members of a key U.S. Environmental Protection Agency science advisory board is a deputy toxicologist for the state of Texas whose work has been criticized as part of a state effort to downplay the health effects of smog.

The toxicologist is at least the third person with current or former ties to the Texas environmental agency to either advise or work at the EPA under the Trump administration as it loosens federal environmental rules.

The appointment is the latest sign of how a state agency that was often at loggerheads with federal environmental regulators during the Obama administration is now on the inside, contributing experience, know-how and scientific approach to air and water issues.

This month, EPA acting Administrator Andrew Wheeler named Sabine Lange, the toxicology division section manager at the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, to the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee, which provides policymakers with advice on how to set smog limits to protect public health.

Lange, who will continue working at the Texas commission, and other experts “will provide critical scientific advice to EPA as it evaluates where to set national standards for key pollutants like ozone and particulate matter,” Wheeler said. “They are highly qualified and have a diverse set of backgrounds in fields like toxicology, engineering, medicine, ecology, and atmospheric science.”

But Elena Craft, a health scientist with Environmental Defense Fund, said that a 2015 Texas Commission on Environmental Quality smog workshop at which Lange presented a paper was part of an effort “to undermine scientific underpinnings of the (smog) standards.”

Workshop participants, including Lange, “Presented a one-sided view of the science and economics around the standard,” she wrote in a 2015 blog piece about the workshop. She accused Lange’s analysis of oversimplifying the issue and focusing on how healthy people are affected by smog, “effectively ignoring those vulnerable members of the population,” including seniors, obese people, people with asthma and children.

Craft told the American-Statesman that Lange’s appointment shows the EPA is “trying to essentially populate (the advisory committee) with lots of scientists who would be considered as having fringe opinions of the scientific literature.”

Asked to respond to the criticism, Lange said that as a member of the committee “I will be reserving my discussions and comments about standards for the (smog) pollutants for the (committee) review.”

“As a member of CASAC I will offer my scientific opinion of the ozone literature and ozone analyses, and those opinions will be available to you and to all members of the public in formats such as my responses to charge questions and my discussions at meetings,” she said.

She was nominated for the position by Bryan Shaw, former chairman of the Texas environmental commission.

Shaw did not return a request for comment.

### **Remaking EPA boards**

The appointment comes as the EPA remakes its science advisory boards. Finalists for another EPA science advisory group, for example, include researchers who reject mainstream climate science and have argued against environmental regulations for years, according to a report last week in E&E News, an energy and environment trade publication.

Last year, then-EPA chief Scott Pruitt, named Michael Honeycutt, director of the Texas environmental commission's toxicology division, as head of the EPA's Science Advisory Board.

He was recommended to lead the Trump administration environmental science board by a Texas Republican donor.

Honeycutt has gained notoriety for what many scientists say are anomalous theories about air quality. He has suggested, for example, that making smog regulations more stringent will not cut asthma-related health problems and has suggested assessments of the dangers of mercury and arsenic are overblown.

### **Smith's legacy**

In some respects, the newfound Texas ties are the legacy of U.S. Rep. Lamar Smith, R-San Antonio, who represents parts of Central Texas and is retiring at the end of the year. As chairman of the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology, Smith launched an effort last year to reshape an agency he had long vilified.

"EPA has long been on a path of regulatory overreach," Smith said last year, vowing to remake the agency, long a goal of industries that are regulated by the EPA.

Relations between the state and the EPA probably reached a nadir in 2012, after then-regional administrator Al Armendariz was forced to resign amid a barrage of criticism from Republicans after footage surfaced that included him using the word "crucify" to describe how he would go after companies violating environmental laws.

Now the Dallas-based EPA regional administrator post is occupied by Anne Idsal, who formerly served as general counsel to the Texas commission during Gov. Rick Perry's administration. During her tenure, the state agency and the EPA sparred over air and water quality rules.

"I know that the cooperative relationship between the states and the EPA will continue to improve," Shaw, then-chairman of the Texas environmental commission said last year in praising her appointment.



## AIR POLLUTION

### Texas complains about cost of meeting pollution standards

Sean Reilly, E&E News reporter

Published: Friday, October 26, 2018

*This article was updated at 6:02 p.m. EDT.*

The head of Texas' environmental agency is attacking long-standing procedures for meeting national air quality standards only two weeks after one of his employees won appointment to an EPA advisory panel that helps set those standards.

Strategies "to help nonattainment areas attain and maintain compliance ... can have numerous adverse impacts," Toby Baker, executive director of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, wrote in [comments](#) posted yesterday on the website [regulations.gov](#).

Among those adverse impacts, Baker pointed to the expense to state agencies of coming up with compliance plans, adding that meeting tighter standards can also hurt economic growth. He also cited studies suggesting that money spent on regulations could be better used to directly enhance people's safety and health.

Under the Clean Air Act, EPA is supposed to regularly review and, if needed, change the air quality standards for ozone, lead and four other "criteria" pollutants. Aiding in those reviews is the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee, a seven-member panel named by the EPA administrator.

Baker's comments came in response to a June invitation from EPA for public feedback on how the committee, usually known by its acronym CASAC, should consider "any adverse public health, welfare, social, economic, or energy effects which may result from various strategies for attainment and maintenance" of the standards.

The committee will be closely involved in two assessments of the standards for ozone and particulate matter. On Oct. 10, acting EPA chief Andrew Wheeler named five new members to the CASAC, including Sabine Lange, the section manager for the Texas agency's toxicology division.

In emailed responses to questions released late today through a spokeswoman, both Baker and Lange said she would act independently.

"I respect Dr. Lange and rely on her technical expertise and would never seek to influence her decisions in her professional roles," Baker said. Lange acknowledged that she had reviewed a draft of Baker's comments, but said she was since appointed to CASAC as an independent adviser with expertise in toxicology and air pollution, not as a representative of the Texas commission.

"Therefore, I will not be receiving instructions from Director Baker or anyone else (inside or outside of TCEQ) on what concerns I should raise at CASAC meetings," Lange said. "In addition, now that I am a member of CASAC, I will not be contributing to TCEQ's public comments on any EPA document that will be reviewed by CASAC."

The Texas agency was a frequent foe of Obama-era environmental regulations. Three years ago, for example, Michael Honeycutt, director of TCEQ's toxicology division, helped spearhead a workshop that strongly challenged the scientific rationale for tightening the ozone standard from 75 parts per billion to 70 ppb. Honeycutt now chairs the Science Advisory Board, another influential EPA panel.

EPA's June request for feedback came a month after then-Administrator Scott Pruitt laid out new guidelines for conducting reviews of the air quality thresholds. While Pruitt portrayed the new process as a needed streamlining, critics see it as an attempt to undercut protection of public health as the guiding priority in deciding whether tighter pollutant standards are needed.

The deadline for comments was this past Wednesday; while only a handful of filings have thus far shown up on [regulations.gov](#), there is often a lag between the time comments are submitted and when they are publicly posted.

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# Overnight Energy: GM proposes electric car mandate | Deadline nears for EPA car rule commercial Greens change tactics to mobilize climate voters

BY MIRANDA GREEN AND TIMOTHY CAMA - 10/26/18 04:01 PM EDT

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**GM WANTS ELECTRIC CAR MANDATE:** Major car manufacturer General Motors is asking the Trump administration to back a national car program that would make automakers in all 50 states annually increase their output of electric vehicles.

The National Zero Emissions Vehicle Program endorsed by GM on Friday would gradually increase the percentage of electric vehicles manufacturers would have to make for their fleet each year starting at 7 percent in 2021 and rising to 25 percent by 2030.

The call from the Detroit-based company comes as the administration is considering a new vehicle emissions rule that would undermine a current standard in place that is championed by California.

The administration contends that the standard, determined under the Obama administration, is too stringent and would harm the car industry. It rolled out a replacement called the Safer Affordable Fuel-Efficient rule this summer.

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GM submitted its idea to the Environmental Protection Agency during the open public comment period under the new rule. The window for commenting closes at midnight tonight.

The car manufacturer is calling its idea a compromise.

"We believe in a policy approach that better promotes U.S. innovation and starts a much-needed national discussion on electric vehicle development and deployment in this country," said Mark Reuss, executive vice president and president of the Global Product Group and Cadillac General Motors Company.

"A National Zero Emissions Program will drive the scale and infrastructure investments needed to allow the U.S. to lead the way to a zero emissions future."

[Read more.](#)

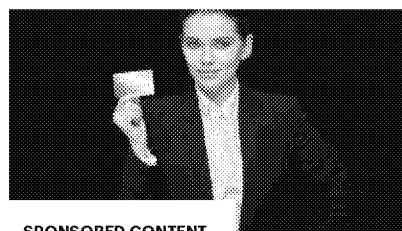
*Pencils down at midnight:* Midnight Friday is the deadline for companies, associations, states, lawmakers, the public and others to submit comments to the EPA and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration on the auto emissions rule rollback.

As of Friday afternoon, the regulatory docket said it has received more than 79,000 comments, though it often lags behind actual comment submissions. The rule is the most popular item on the regulations.gov portal.

Still want to get your comment in? Submit it at [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov).

*California leaders slam proposal:* California's governor, attorney general and top air regulator headed to the side of a freeway Friday to preview their formal comments on the proposal.

California Air Resources Board Chairwoman Mary Nichols called the proposal "completely unjustified and illegal."



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"It's poorly argued, poorly organized, not based in fact and illegal," she said.

"The benefits of the clean car standards are well-documented," said Attorney General Xavier Becerra (D). "They save consumers money, reduce emissions, support energy independence and help prevent the effect of climate change."

"In California, we can't afford to backslide," he said.

Gov. Jerry Brown (D) weighed in as well: "This Trump administration attack on innovative vehicle technology jeopardizes the health of millions, and will cost billions at the pump."

*EPA shoots back:* An hour before the California press conference, acting EPA chief Andrew Wheeler criticized the Golden State's leaders, saying they haven't been constructive throughout the process of drafting the rollback.

"I had the opportunity to meet with CARB Chairwoman Mary Nichols in July where she promised to submit a counter-proposal from California within a week of EPA and the Department of Transportation publishing the proposed Safer Affordable Fuel Efficient Vehicles rule. It has been 10 weeks and the Trump administration has still yet to receive a counter-proposal," Wheeler said in a statement.

*Conservatives line up in support:* More than 90 conservative movement leaders signed onto a letter Thursday backing the administration.

Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards "were established in 1975 during a time of grave national concern over fuel scarcity and America's reliance on imported energy. Both our national dialogue, as well as our access to fuel resources, has changed significantly, and a review of the purpose and effectiveness of existing CAFE standards is long overdue," they wrote.

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**OREGON GOV SEEKS TO BLOCK OFFSHORE DRILLING:** Oregon Gov. Kate Brown (D) signed an executive order that seeks to ban offshore drilling in the waters off the state's coast.

The order signed Thursday bans oil and natural gas drilling in the three miles of water that Oregon officials control. But it also directs state agencies to block infrastructure and other means to support drilling anywhere off the coast, which would make building pipelines or other structures difficult.

The Trump administration proposed earlier this year to allow offshore drilling off Oregon and all other Pacific, Atlantic and Gulf coast states. Nearly all Pacific and Atlantic coast states are fighting the plan.

"Oregonians have a long and proud history of standing up to defend our state. And at a time when the Trump administration is trying to allow oil rigs to be built off nearly every coastline in America, I'm tired of waiting

## **21 States, 5 Cities Demand Trump Administration Preserve California's Stricter Fuel Efficiency Guidelines**

By GLENN FLEISHMAN October 26, 2018

Attorney generals from 21 states and leaders of five cities demanded that the Trump administration withdraw its attempt to weaken clean car standards. The federal government said it will weaken federal targets for vehicle fuel efficiency, and end California's ability to set stricter standards than those applied nationally.

"It's not just the issue of climate change that's in the balance. It's also the health of the American people," said California's attorney general, Xavier Becerra in a news conference. Outgoing Governor Jerry Brown and the head of the California Air Resources Board (CARB) stood alongside.

The rules currently in effect require that the average fuel efficiency across all cars and light trucks sold in the U.S. by 2025 is at least 50 miles per gallon. California's rules also cover electric vehicles, allowing it to require automakers to sell at least a specified number—about 1 million in the state by 2025, up from 420,000 today. The goal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% below 1990 levels by 2030.

The new Trump administration plan freezes the average fleet efficiency in 2020, which is 37 mpg, for six more years.

After the EPA and CARB agreed at the tail end of the Obama administration, in January 2017, to pursue current standards, the EPA reversed its decision April 2018, and officially announced its proposed rollback on August 2.

California and the EPA have battled over numbers. The EPA says relaxing rules would save consumers \$1,850 per vehicle, while California's Becerra said improved mileage would save \$1,620 instead over a vehicle's lifetime, beyond the reduction in gases tied to climate change.

California's more rigorous rules, granted by waivers since the 1960s under the 1963 Clean Air Act and subsequent updates. Since 2002, that's included a series of efforts to more rapidly reduce greenhouse-gas emissions from cars, light

waiver for this program in 2007, but the decision was reversed in the Obama administration before it was settled in court.

Beginning in 2005, a number of states also adopted California's rules. Currently, 12 others states and the District of Columbia use those standards.

The EPA wants to block these waivers going forward as well.

The parties jointly demanding a return to rules agreed on in January 2017 are California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Iowa, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington, along with the District of Columbia, Los Angeles, New York, Oakland, San Francisco, and San Jose.

While a similar group with two fewer states signaled their intent to sue on August 2 after the administration announced the specifics of its proposal. However, the current demand isn't yet in court. Rather, the group filed extensive comments, released statements, and held press conferences. A suit could still follow.

Previously, 17 states and Washington, D.C., sued the Trump administration on May 1 over how the EPA withdrew its evaluation from January 2017 that supported the standards. In that suit, attorneys general argued that the administration's action violated a law against arbitrary and capricious decisions. The EPA said standards were too restrictive.

## **EPA Chided Over Defense to Gulf Pollution Claims**

By Steven M. Sellers

Posted Oct. 26, 2018, 9:51 AM

- Federal complaint challenges EPA's lowering of river oxygen levels
- Agency records don't "speak for themselves," federal court says

A federal judge chided the EPA for defending itself from an environmental group's suit by asserting that its documents on loosened oxygen standards for some Gulf Coast waters "speak for themselves."

Federal court rules require specific answers to civil complaints, and they apply to the EPA administrative decisions challenged by the Gulf Restoration Network, an environmental advocacy group, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana said Oct. 25.

The Environmental Protection Agency's lowered standards for dissolved oxygen levels in 31 water bodies and rivers near Lakes Ponchartrain and Maurepas allow more pollution, aren't science-based, and threaten wildlife, the complaint says.

EPA responded in court filings that its decisions were based on documents that "speak for themselves," and that the group's other allegations required "no response."

But defendants, even the EPA, must give answers that "state in short and plain terms its defenses to each claim asserted" as well as admissions or denials of allegations under Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(b), the court said.

Here, EPA's responses failed to meet the minimum standards under those rules.

The court also rejected the agency's assertion that "records review" cases are exempt from the federal pleading requirements.

The agency must file a more responsive answer to the complaint within 15 days.

Judge Mary Ann Vial Lemmon wrote the opinion.

The Tulane Environmental Law Clinic represented Gulf Restoration Network.

The case is Gulf Restoration Network v. EPA, 2018 BL 394564, E.D. La., No. 18-cv-1632, 10/25/18.

To contact the reporter on this story: Steven M. Sellers in Washington at [ssellers@bloomberglaw.com](mailto:ssellers@bloomberglaw.com)

To contact the editor responsible for this story: Steven Patrick at [spatrick@bloomberglaw.com](mailto:spatrick@bloomberglaw.com)



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## **Progress in Craft-Turney water supply issues TCEQ continues investigating source of contamination**

by Cristin Parker news@mediactr.com

October 26, 2018

While the do not use order has been lifted for Craft Turney Water Supply Corporation's customers, state and corporation officials continue to work together to determine the source of the recent contamination found in the utility's water.

On Oct. 3, 2018 the Craft-Turney Water Supply Corp. notified the TCEQ of a backflow incident impacting 11 connections to the system. Corporation officials initially issued the do not use to customers of this portion of the distribution system but was expanded to customers in the general vicinity of these connections as a precaution.

"The do not use order was officially lifted on Oct. 19, based on sample results from additional samples collected from the remaining limited area of the system under the ban on Oct. 16," TCEQ official Andre Keese said in a statement provided to the Cherokeean Herald on Thursday, Oct. 25.

The TCEQ suspects a fungicide entered the water supply. State officials collected samples from Craft-Turney's public water supply distribution system on Oct. 10, that were analyzed for methylene bis-thiocyanate by the EPA's laboratory in Houston. The chemical was not detected in any of the samples. Previous sample taken from the expanded area tested positive for the chemical chlorothalonil, which was below detectable levels.

"An evaluation of the results for these samples indicate that though the chlorothalonil is still present at low levels in this area, the levels detected are well below those that would pose a health concern," Keese stated. "The TCEQ will continue to monitor Craft-Turney's water





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[https://www.theadvocate.com/baton\\_rouge/news/environment/article\\_d563ac36-d87b-11e8-b7ea-ff9b97013687.html](https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/environment/article_d563ac36-d87b-11e8-b7ea-ff9b97013687.html)

# **Baton Rouge area groundwater commission won't follow 'absurd' state law, chairman says**

**BY STEVE HARDY | SHARDY@THEADVOCATE.COM   OCT 27, 2018 - 5:10 PM**

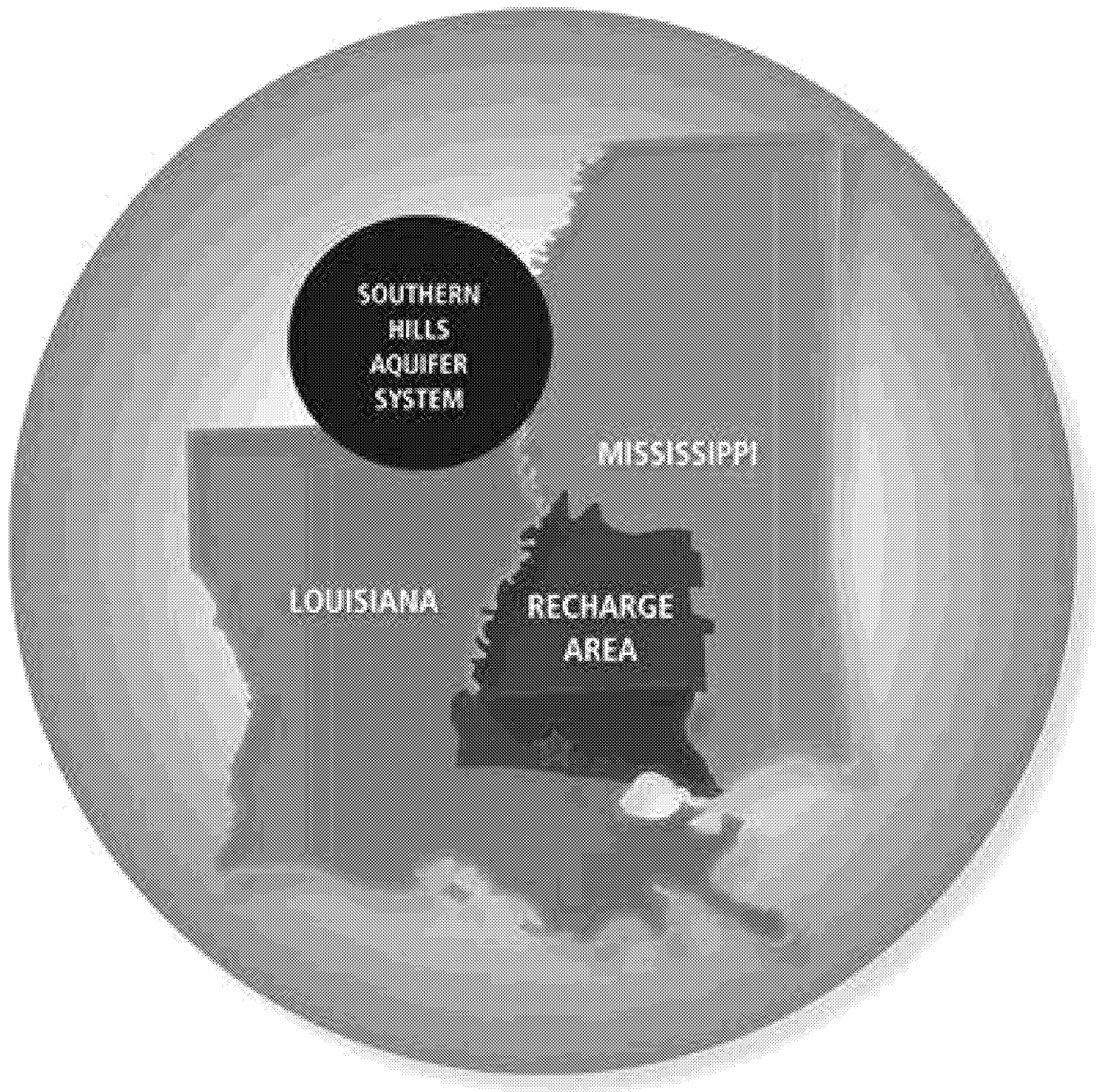


Image of the Southern Hills Aquifer system provided by the Capital Area Ground Water Conservation Commission. Southern Hills provides water for drinking and commercial use throughout the Baton Rouge metro area.

Image provided

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Steve Hardy

The chairman of the local groundwater commission says he isn't going to let "absurd" state laws prevent Ascension Parish from having a say in managing the area's main aquifer.

Earlier this year, the Capital Area Ground Water Conservation Commission voted to include Ascension Parish into its district and give the local government a seat at the table. The commission ran the decision by the state Attorney General's Office for an opinion on the legal consequences of the move.

The Attorney General's Office recently released its opinion, which said that while the commission has authority to bring new parishes into the district and those parishes must have representation, the board's overall number of commissioners is set at 17 by state law.

*Story Continued Below*

Giving Ascension Parish a spot would require an 18th seat.

"Because the language of the statute regarding the number of members is mandatory, and historically the Legislature amends the statute to increase the number of its members, this office is of the opinion the Legislature would need to amend the law to allow for the Board to have eighteen members instead of seventeen," the opinion stated.

Groundwater commission Chairman Barry Hugghins -- noting that attorney general opinions are advisory and don't have the effect of law -- said the board will keep going down the path it's on.

Hugghins said the law makes no sense.

"It's poorly written, and the consequences are never thought out," he said.

The commission could give each parish a voice and stick to 17 seats, but to do so would have to boot a utility company, industrial corporation or agricultural representative -- all parties with an interest in the region's underground water supply. Other members represent the state's Department of Environmental Quality and Office of Conservation.

Hugghins said he won't toss any of them off; if somebody has a problem with an extra member, they can take it up in court.

The chairman said he's got cover from legal staff in the Legislature and from the governor's office, which confirmed Ascension Chief Administrative Officer Kenneth Dawson to represent the parish.

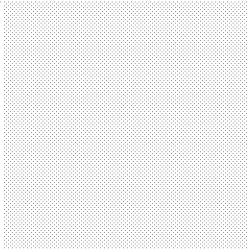
**Gov. Edwards announces board, commission appointments**

Dawson did not respond to multiple interview requests.

Some questioned the inclusion of Ascension into the groundwater commission in the first place. The entire parish lies south of the Southern Hills Aquifer, but Ascension residents drink its water, which is piped in via the Baton Rouge Water Company.

As fresh water is pumped out of the aquifer, salt water leeches across an underground fault line which runs roughly along Interstate 10. Amid discussions about protecting the groundwater, most conversation has centered on limiting the amount that can be drawn by companies such as Georgia Pacific, ExxonMobil and Entergy, though a few people have called for restrictions on sales out of the district to which Ascension now belongs.

Hughhins said he's looking for legislators to sponsor a new bill in the upcoming session to do away with any cap on the number of commissioners, so long as every seat is warranted.



### **Why the sale of water from Baton Rouge aquifer outside parish boundaries is stirring debate**

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## EPA grant to aid agriculture training site

The National Center for Appropriate Technology in Fayetteville was awarded a \$100,000 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency to help restore a 170-year-old farm into a training site.

The Fayetteville-branch of the farm organization plans to use the money to teach sustainable agriculture production and farm management practices to beginning farmers on a 5-acre lot on Broyles Avenue on the west side of town.

Margo Hale, the center's southeast regional director, said this is the first project of its kind to receive federal environmental education funding and the EPA was "excited to see what comes of this."

The EPA awards between \$2 million and \$3.5 million in environmental education grants each year. The Woolsey Incubator Farm in Fayetteville is one of 37 organization projects spanning 29 states, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico to receive 2018 program funding, a news release said Thursday. Funding for other recipients ranges between \$50,000 and \$100,000.

"It's clearly a natural fit, but something different from what they have funded before," Hale said. "In a year or two it will look like a functioning farm."



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## Panel delays action on water quality plan from Huntsville

by Emily Walkenhorst | October 28, 2018 at 2:54 a.m.

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A proposal to change water quality standards in Northwest Arkansas to accommodate for a city's wastewater treatment plant was tabled Friday by an environmental regulatory oversight commission.

Commissioners expressed concern that the data used to support the change weren't recent enough.

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The proposal by the city of Huntsville has been in the works since 2013. The city's permit expired in early 2014, but it has remained active through an administrative hold placed on it by the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality.

Like other cities and companies, Huntsville faces the prospect of having to add stricter discharge limits for minerals in a new permit, something the city and others say is not cost-effective.

Since 2013, state regulation changes and push-back have changed the city's proposal, which now doesn't raise minerals limits in nearby waters as much as the original did.

Chuck Nestrud, an attorney representing the city, said Friday that the proposed levels of minerals passed analysis by an environmental contractor, showing that no aquatic life or designated uses would

be harmed by the changes. A study done by the U.S. Geological Survey found that Beaver Lake, the drinking water source for 400,000 Northwest Arkansans, would not be harmed, either.

But Commissioner Doug Melton, a Northwest Arkansas resident, said he researched the most recent water quality samples measured at War Eagle Creek and found that the minerals levels in one spot were far below what Huntsville was proposing to raise them to.

"That is troublesome," Melton said.

Nestrud said the data used to create the proposal were taken from 2013 because of when the proposal was first made. That is the period of record the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will expect from any proposal to change the state's water quality regulations, which must be approved by the EPA.

"We can't exceed the numbers we're proposing," Nestrud said. "We've showed what we're proposing would be protective of water quality."

Melton argued that what he saw in more recent water quality sampling showed a possibility that War Eagle Creek could be degraded under the new water quality standards.

Samples from March of this year at a department monitoring station off of Arkansas 45 show a chloride level of 4.88 milligrams per liter, a sulfate level of 6.81 milligrams per liter and total dissolved solids level of 92 milligrams per liter, according to department data.

The revised water quality standards would be 39 milligrams per liter for chloride and 248 milligrams per liter for total dissolved solids for War Eagle Creek, stretching from the confluence with Holman Creek and then downstream to Clifty Creek.

For Holman Creek from the confluence with Town Branch downstream to the confluence with War Eagle Creek, the chlorides limit would be 180 milligrams per liter, the sulfates limit would be 48 milligrams per liter and the total dissolved solids limit would be 621 milligrams per liter.

The final change would be for Town Branch from the point of the city's discharge downstream to the confluence with Holman Creek. The limit for chlorides would be 223 milligrams per liter, and the limits for sulfates and total dissolved solids would be 61 milligrams per liter and 779 milligrams per liter, respectively.

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The Ozark Highlands ecoregion has values for streams in the region unless they have been specifically changed. Those limits are 13 milligrams per liter for chlorides, 17 milligrams per liter for sulfates and 240 milligrams per liter for total dissolved solids.

Sarah Clem, branch manager in the department's office of water quality, told the commission that she had an idea for how the city could incorporate more recent data into its analysis to see if it remains solid. The city would not need to pay for a new study or take more samples, she said.

Clem said she could return to the commission's next meeting Dec. 7 with more information, if the city agreed to her idea.

The commission voted, without dissent, to table the proposal until Dec. 7, with several commissioners expressing an interest in keeping the city from spending money on a new study or delaying the proposal much longer.

*Metro on 10/28/2018*

*Print Headline: Panel delays action on water quality plan from Huntsville*

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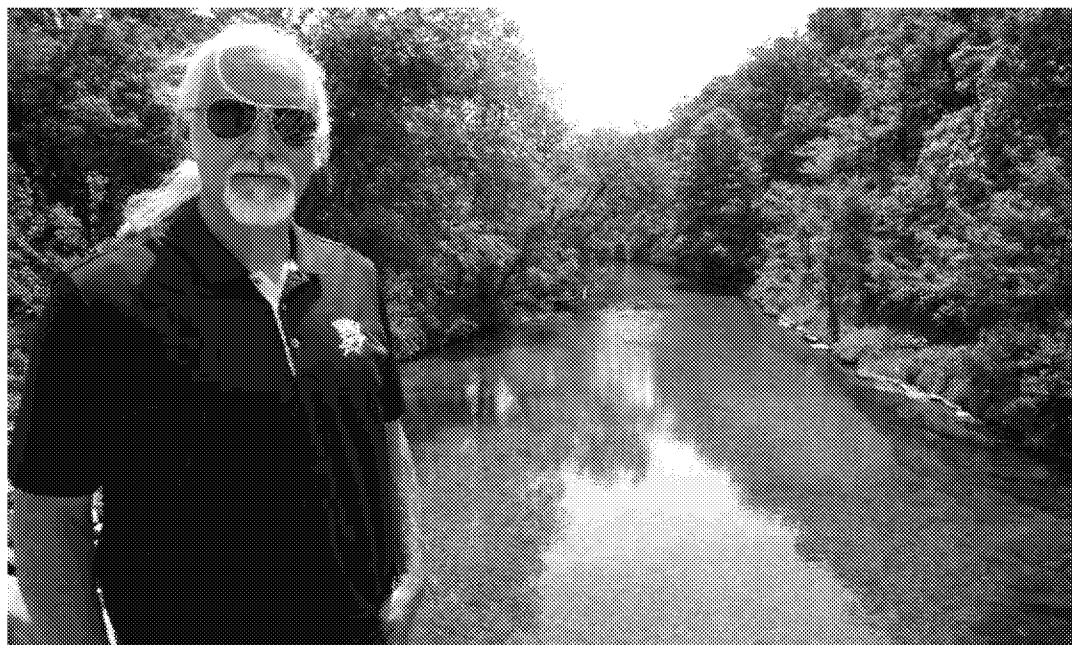
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## Attorney: Saline Creek gravel operation should be shut down now

By Kelly Bostian Tulsa World 8 hrs ago



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David Benham stands on a county road bridge above a section of Saline Creek. He said this stretch of creek is in the condition he would like to see along its full length. KELLY BOSTIAN/Tulsa World file

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**'I just want to save this stream before it's gone': Gravel operation on Saline Creek targeted with citizen lawsuit**

After a gravel mining operation's U.S. Supreme Court bid was denied early this month, an attorney fighting the operation on Saline Creek said it should have been shut down by now to prevent any further damage.

Since 2011, Saline Creek landowner David Benham and attorney Jason Aamodt with Indian Environmental Law Group of Tulsa have fought to stop the Ozark Materials gravel operation, located just upstream from the mouth of the creek where it empties into Hudson Lake, south of Salina.

After lack of action by state and federal agencies, Benham and the law group stepped in and filed a private enforcement action under Section 505 of the Clean Water Act, which allows private individuals to file suit on Clean Water Act violations without state or federal agency involvement.

Ozark Materials appealed an initial loss in U.S. District Court, and in March of this year, the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals again ruled that Ozark Materials was operating in violation of Clean Water Act rules and assessed a \$35,000 fine, as well as nearly \$400,000 in additional attorney fees.

On June 1, Judge John Dowdell in the Northern Oklahoma U.S. District Court issued an order accepting a restoration plan forwarded by Benham, according to the original ruling, that named the Cherokee Nation as the entity to hold a conservation easement and monitor progress of Ozark's restoration project. The judge also ordered, as part of Benham's plan, that Ozark must apply for an "after-the-fact" Section 404 Clean Water Act permit "in order to ensure future compliance with the CWA."

Ozark Materials owner Brad Eastman and attorney Wilfred Wright Jr. of Claremore then filed a petition for a "writ of certiorari," a request for review of the lower court's ruling by the Supreme Court. That petition was denied Oct. 1, but the gravel pit continues to operate and no restorations have begun.

Eastman said Friday his next move is unknown, and he needs to consult with his attorney. "Call me back in a month or two," he said.

Aamodt charged that state and federal agencies have fallen short in their enforcement of the Clean Water Act and that an important Oklahoma reference stream continues to suffer. Reference streams are water bodies recognized as holding important and pristine ecological characteristics.

"They should be stepping in and shutting him down right now," he said of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Oklahoma Department of Mines. "The guy is a law-breaker. It's not me saying that, it's four different federal judges, and we're in this situation because the agencies are ineffective and do a poor job of enforcement in this state."

"David Benham shouldn't have had to have done this in the first place," he said. "The agencies should be embarrassed; they're doing a terrible job."

Counsel for the Oklahoma Department of Mines was not available for comment Friday, but spokeswoman Suzen Rodesney said that while the department was not party to the case, they could respond to specific questions next week. She added that her experience with the department for many years runs contrary to Aamodt's assertion.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers spokesman Brannen Parrish said if the order requires Ozark to seek a permit it would have to apply, "if it hasn't already," and "we cannot discuss specific permit applications in accordance with our regulations."

Parris forwarded a statement: "For more than 40 years, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has fulfilled its responsibilities for regulating waters of the United States under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will continue to diligently execute our regulatory duties within the scope of the authority granted to us. We were not a party to this case, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was not ordered to take action after the fact. The Tulsa District stands by the professionalism, experience and expertise of our workforce as they execute their duties within the scope of the law."

Parrish said that any individual can report a suspected Clean Water Act violation to the Corps' regulatory office and, if regulators find the operation to currently be in violation, a cease and desist order could follow until the issue is resolved.

"We encourage people to contact us with those concerns," he said.

Aamodt holds that the Corps should not have expected a direct order from the court because the U.S. District Court clearly stated that Ozark Materials was operating in violation on several occasions, was required to seek the after-the-fact permit in June and that Ozark's legal options came to an end the first of October.

"That's the reason the suit was filed in the first place," he said. "The Corps went to inspect the site and didn't even get out of their car. They failed to do their job. The court was asked and said point-blank that a Clean Water Act permit is required."

Either agency could halt the gravel excavation operations, he said. The Corps could choose to acknowledge the federal court's determination that the mine is operating in violation or the Department of Mines could revoke its permit because it is supposed to be in possession of "all required environmental permits" to keep its state-issued permit.

"The court has been clear in ruling that they do not have the required permit to operate. As the agencies charged with enforcing those regulations, I don't know what they are waiting for," he said.

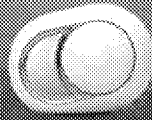
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## Kelly Bostian

Staff Writer

Kelly Bostian writes about and photographs all things involving the environment, conservation, wildlife, and outdoors recreation. Phone: 918-581-8357

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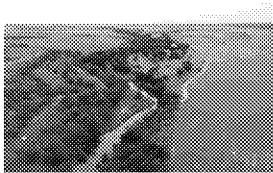


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## San Angelo one of many entities pursuing wastewater reuse programs

Matthew McDaniel, San Angelo Standard-Times

Published 3:41 p.m. CT Oct. 27, 2018



(Photo: COSATX)

Even in the midst of a particularly rainy year, West Texans know the next drought may be just around the corner, and conservation is always the best policy.

Just before the big rains of late September and October, when the city was still 1-inch below the normal rainfall amount for the year, the San Angelo City Council unanimously voted in executive session to move forward with a plan to obtain permits for an indirect potable reuse (IPR) system expected to save 7.5 million gallons of water every day in the future.

Writing in early October, San Angelo Mayor Brenda Gunter said *"after years of study that spanned dozens of options, the City's elected officials and its management are resolute in our pursuit of what we're calling the Concho River Water Project."*

*"In short, this effort will extend San Angelo's water supply beyond our lakes and the Hickory Aquifer. It will give our community a reliable and replenishing source that will see us through even the most severe droughts. And it will produce tastier drinking water at a cost-effective rate."*

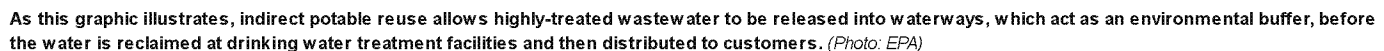
*"The Concho River Water Project involves releasing highly treated water from the City's wastewater treatment plant into the Concho River. The river would serve as a natural pipeline and buffer, transporting the water farther downstream to a City-owned facility. From there the water would be piped back to the water treatment plant to undergo further treatment to drinking standards."*

Municipal reuse is a hot topic these days in places where limited water supplies have caused hardships for years, and states like California – facing their own major water shortages – have taken notice.



According to information from the CRMWD's website, the \$14 million Raw Water Production Facility currently produces about 1.5 million gallons of reclaimed water daily, which is treated using a combination of microfiltration, reverse osmosis and ultraviolet disinfection before being combined with raw water from the river, which is then distributed to five water treatment plants in the region, where it is retreated using conventional drinking water treatment methods.

As the DPR plant came online in Big Spring in 2014, another was nearing the finish line in Wichita Falls, and the pair were featured in news stories nationwide as the idea, often referred to somewhat derisively as “toilet-to-tap” became a frequent topic around watercoolers.



Daniel Nix is the Utilities Operation Manager for the city's Public Works Department, and talked about how his city became one of the most-resistant in the nation.

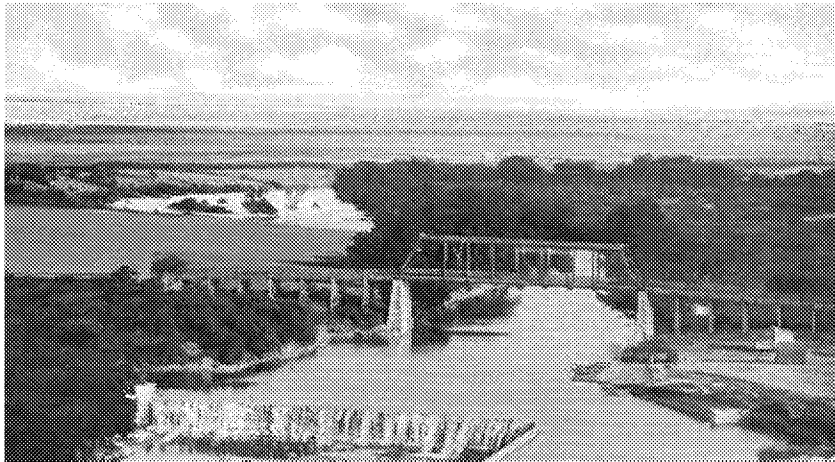
"Our IPR project came online in February 2018, putting treated wastewater into Lake Arrowhead," Nix said.

"In 8 months of operation, we were able to show that we kept the lake somewhere between 2 and 5-percent higher than we did the previous year without the IPR, and with less rainfall in the summer."

Nix said they decided to temporarily halt the discharge into the bottom Lake Arrowhead last week after big rains filled the reservoir to capacity, and began flowing over the spillway.

"Obviously, you don't want to be putting in water if the lake is already full," he explained. "Using all that electricity and chemical to get that water conditioned to the point we could discharge it to the lake wouldn't be good, so we're saving money on that right now, and we've gone back to our original outfall, which is the Wichita River."

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**This colorized postcard shows Lone Wolf Bridge in San Angelo as it appeared in 1905, and was taken from a photograph captured by M.C. Ragsdale. The city's water treatment plant is just below the dam seen here. (Photo: Standard-Times file)**

Nix said in the initial 8 months, the facility discharged about 10 billion gallons in all.

"Normally, that 10 billion gallons would have just been put back in the river, and it would've flowed downstream to someone else," he said.

Nix said that the DPR plant served them well during the drought period from 2014-2015, but public support and cooperation were a major part of the program's success.

"We had a huge conservation effort going on," he said. "We had drought restrictions in place...we reduced our overall consumption by about 65 percent, plus we were reusing half of that water through DPR, and we saw an 80-percent reduction of what we were taking out of the lakes during June, July and August of that year."

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"The DPR project was very successful, and very well received by the public," he said. "When we had to shut it off in July of 2015 because the lakes were full, but the public didn't really want us to."

He said the DPR facility is currently severed from the system, but in the event of severe drought, it could be reconnected and put online.

Nix said when the drought struck, the city was lucky to have some infrastructure in place that could be re-engineered to become a direct potable reuse facility.

"We had a plant online that was used to treat brackish water from Lake Kemp," he said. "And we had about 6 years' experience working with that before that water source became unusable because of the drought."

Nix said evaporation concentrated the salinity of Lake Kemp, and rather than mothball the microfiltration and RO facility, they re-engineered it for DPR use, and it worked extremely well at treating wastewater effluent.

"In essence, it was overbuilt for that job," he said. "It was designed to treat water with salt concentrations up around 3,000 parts per million, and we were pushing a wastewater content that only had around 800 PPM in it, so it performed really well."



Nix said that while the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality worked with Wichita Falls to handle permitting quickly due to the impending drought, the process usually takes a few years.

"We got our DPR permitted and online in 27 months," he said. "But again, that was during a drought and the state was very cooperative, because nobody wanted to see a town with 100,000 people run dry."

"The IPR permitting process took quite a bit longer," he explained. "About 5 years all-told, and we had to model the lake, and the wastewater input into it, and from that, they establish what levels the wastewater must be treated to."

"Roughly, it took a year to do the modeling, a year to do the permitting, another year to design the facility, and a year or two to build it, so about 5 years for the whole process."

He said that due to the extreme nature of the drought at that time, Wichita Falls pursued permitting and design of both DPR and IPR projects simultaneously.

Nix said his city has worked to make the system as ecofriendly as possible, and residents there are able to get beneficial compost for their yards thanks to the process.

"We have to remove all of the solids," he said. "All of these plants are designed to do that, of course, but then we digest those to lower the volumes, and in Wichita Falls we actually combine that with chipped trees and yard waste, and we compost all of that, and we give that back to the citizens a couple of times each year – we have a giveaway – and the rest of it is sold, so we have a beneficial use for everything that comes into the facility."

Nix said that while some may be concerned about pharmaceuticals making it into the water supply, the levels are statistically near-zero.

"As far as pharmaceuticals go, some of those do get treated-out in the wastewater process," Nix said. "But the plants aren't really designed to remove those, because they aren't regulated, and also because we are just starting to understand them."

"The DPR was very effective at removing those compounds, because we used reverse osmosis process, but the IPR does not, so we rely heavily on that environmental buffer to attenuate those compounds."

"The reason we are talking about pharmaceuticals now, is because we are just now able to really detect them in the minute concentrations where they exist," he said. "Normally, when you are talking about water, you are talking in parts-per-million – that's six zeros – but when you're talking about pharmaceuticals, you are talking about parts-per-trillion, so you're looking at something with 12 zeros after it."

"You're talking about such tiny amounts, that someone would have to drink swimming pools' worth of water every day just to get a therapeutic dose," he said. "So drinking a few 8-oz. glasses of water isn't going to do you any harm."

Nix said that, all things considered, the programs have been a resounding success.

"We really couldn't have done this without the public support, and we've had that from day one," he said. "I think the citizens of Wichita Falls are happy with the reuse programs, and they are happy with the route we are taking with managing their resources."

In concluding her column about the project, San Angelo Mayor Brenda Gunter explained that, with infrastructure improvements, planners hope to improve the system's overall integrity and boost the supply for many decades to come, offering:

- A reliable and secure source of water.
- A cost-effective water supply.
- Water that is more aesthetically pleasing.
- Fewer legal and political hurdles than are typically involved with developing a supply.
- A shorter timeframe in which it can be accomplished.
- A process that utilizes proven science in terms of water quality, hydrology and engineering.

*"Much of the cost of the Concho River Water Project involves badly needed upgrades to our water and wastewater treatment plants – improvements that are necessary independent of this project," That's because parts of the water plant are 100 years old. Updated plants with 21st-century treatment capabilities will also allow us to treat water from our lakes to a higher standard. Designs on those improvements will soon begin.*

*When finished, the Concho River Water Project will produce approximately 7.5 million gallons per day. That is comparable to the 8 million gallons the Hickory Aquifer can produce (although an expansion to 12 million gallons is underway). The river project equates to about 60 percent of San Angelo's average daily water usage.*



**Brenda Gunter** (Photo: Contributed photo)

*Even better, the Concho River Water Project makes greater use of our existing water supplies. How? As San Angelo uses more water, it will eventually be released into the river and recouped for further use.*

*Lastly, this project will diversify San Angelo's portfolio of water sources, a needed addition to our existing lake supplies and our groundwater in the Hickory. Because we won't be reliant on any one source for water, that will make us more prepared for the sorts of extreme drought we've experienced since 2011. That's an enviable position for any city to be in, particularly in West Texas, where water is scarce.*

*That does not mean our march for more water is over. Our work with the cities of Abilene and Midland continues, as the West Texas Water Partnership searches for a water source that could serve all three communities. Frankly, the work of finding more water will never end ... nor should it. Such is the importance of water to ensure that San Angelo continues to thrive for generations to come."*

According to information from the Environmental Protection Agency, entities pursuing potable reuse projects as of mid-2017 included Brownwood; North Texas Municipal Water District; Tarrant Regional Water District; City of Abilene; Village of Cloudcroft, New Mexico; Hampton Road Sanitation District in Virginia; City of Franklin,

Tennessee and 17 separate entities in California.

Read or Share this story: <https://www.gosanangelo.com/story/news/2018/10/27/san-angelo-one-many-entities-pursuing-wastewater-reuse-programs/1789968002/>



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## Environment notebook

by Emily Walkenhorst | October 28, 2018 at 2:48 a.m.

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### Panel OKs effort to set rule on wells

The Arkansas Pollution Control and Ecology Commission has approved starting a rule-making process to transfer a permitting program for oil and gas disposal wells from one state agency to another.

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The rule would move the approximately 500 no-discharge permits from the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality's purview to that of the Oil and Gas Commission, which already has the same permitting program.

One person expressed concern about the permitting program during the commission's meeting Friday.

Ellen Carpenter described a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency inspection of an oil-storage tank in Union County that was found to be overfull and leaking and that had dead birds in it, among other things. She said Department of Environmental Quality data showed it hadn't been inspected since 2009.

Commissioner Lawrence Bengal, who is also director of the Oil and Gas Commission, assured Carpenter that his agency would inspect the sites more frequently than what she described.

Bengal recused himself from the voice vote, which had no opposition.

Contractor to begin work on river bridge

A federal contractor on Monday will begin construction to stabilize the Ponca bridge over the Buffalo National River.

The Eastern Federal Highways Program awarded a contract to Kovilic Construction Co. of Franklin Park, Ill., to work on stabilizing the bridge, resurfacing it and patching up weak spots, according to a news release from the National Park Service.

The estimated cost of the work is \$350,000, said Lauren Ray, a park ranger and interpreter at the Buffalo National River. The work should last about 40 days, during which periodic closures of the bridge may occur, according to the news release.

The bridge is one of the last Works Progress Administration-era spans in Arkansas, the news release said. It was built by the administration in 1943. After the federal government proposed closing the bridge in 2006, the public called for its preservation.

The bridge has worn down with use, which once included frequent motor vehicle traffic, Ray said. Now it's mostly used by pedestrians.

*State Desk on 10/28/2018*

*Print Headline: Panel OKs effort to set rule on wells Contractor to begin work on river bridge*

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Opinion

## Opinion: 'Environmentalism' shouldn't be a dirty word for Republicans

By Loras Holmberg Guest Columnist

Posted Oct 27, 2018 at 1:01 AM

Is there a more despised word among Republicans than "environmentalist"? For many GOP voters, the term conjures up a mental image of tree-hugging socialists hell-bent on regulating our country back to the Stone Age.

That's a shame. The GOP actually boasts a proud history of environmental activism, one grounded in the fundamentally conservative notion that natural resources ought to be preserved.

It's time for Republicans to reclaim that heritage.

Democrats might be the face of modern environmentalism -- but Republicans started the movement. Teddy Roosevelt was the driving force behind the national park and forest system. Richard Nixon created both the EPA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Republican senators voted in favor of the Clean Air Act, the landmark bill to curb air pollution.

Ronald Reagan once exclaimed "What is a conservative after all but one who conserves, one who is committed to protecting ... our rivers and mountains, our plains and meadows and forests ... this is what we leave to our children."

One threat to our environment is urban sprawl driven by population growth. The United States houses 326 million residents. By 2060, that number will grow to 404 million people.

Cities and suburbs are ballooning, compelling developers to bulldoze lands and habitats. Every three minutes, human activity claims a football-field-sized patch of natural land in the American West.

Texas adds half a million new residents each year -- and consequently loses about 185 square miles of open space.

In Florida, experts warn that if current trends continue, more than a third of the state's land will be developed by 2070.

This threatens Americans.



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Consider food prices. In 1982, America had an average of two acres of cropland per resident. That figure is on pace to drop to near one acre by 2050. As food demand rises and supply falls, food prices could skyrocket for millions of families. Farmers will have to increase their use of fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides to boost crop yields.

Urban sprawl also destroys the unique identity of communities. At its current rate, by 2060 there could be a 400-mile “seamless corridor of urban development” from Raleigh, N.C., to Atlanta.

The Southeast could become one endless series of subdivisions and strip malls.

It’s possible to prevent such a future. Local zoning boards could declare certain areas off-limits to development. State governments could redesign tax credits to incentivize sustainable development.

At the national level, conservatives could limit future immigration, which will account for nearly 90 percent of U.S. population growth over the coming half-century.

Scaling back “chain migration,” which allows legal immigrants to sponsor an endless chain of non-nuclear family members for green-cards, would drastically slow down growth. Seven in ten immigrants come to America via chain migration.

Trump has already proposed ending chain migration. Congressional Republicans should see this effort through.

“Environmentalism” doesn’t have to be a dirty word. By preserving open spaces and implementing common-sense immigration reforms, conservatives can return to their roots and preserve open spaces for future generations.

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